

FREE LOOK FROM NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC FILING (NEF)

Counsel of record are entitled to one free look at the documents filed in their cases. In order to minimize your PACER bill, it is important to understand how the one free look works.

The free look DOES NOT apply to searches or docket sheets-even if you link to the docket sheet directly from the email Notice of Electronic Filing. The free look also DOES NOT apply if you link to a specific document from the docket sheet.

The free look applies to counsel of record ONLY IF you link to the document directly from the email Notice of Electronic Filing AND ONLY IF it is the first time that you have done so. The opportunity for a free look expires after 15 days. Here is how the free look works:

Each email listed in the account for counsel is given a free look. When each email is read, there will be a hyperlink to the document and to the case. The free look is for the document only. If the case is a Civil case, when the user clicks on the document number, the document should display without asking the user to log in. If the user receives a message that the document cannot be displayed, please look at the address line of the browser and make sure that there are no additional addresses placed in front of the ecf.ncmd.uscourts.gov address. Some email systems will include additional address information in front of the ecf.ncmd.uscourts.gov address. If this happens, please remove all characters in front of ecf.ncmd.uscourts.gov and hit enter. The document should now show up. If the case is a Criminal or a Social Security Case, only the attorney of record will be allowed to view the document. For Criminal or Social Security Cases, the user will be prompted for the ECF login, which must be the ECF login of the attorney for the case. If the user has designated a permanent PACER account to be used, which can be selected on the PACER login screen, the user will not be prompted for a PACER ID. If the user has not designated a permanent PACER account to be used, the user will next see the PACER login screen and a valid PACER ID must be entered. Once a valid PACER ID has been entered, the document will display on the screen and the user should notice that there is not a billing notice saying the user will be charged for viewing the document.

If the user clicks on the hyperlink case number, they will be asked to sign in with their ECF login. If the user has designated a permanent PACER account to be used, which can be selected on the PACER login screen, the user will not be prompted for a PACER ID. If the user has not designated a permanent PACER account to be used, the user will next see the PACER login screen and a valid PACER ID must be entered. The user should then see a billing notice telling the user what the cost will be to view the document.

For Criminal and Social Security Cases, the ECF ID must be the first login id to be entered and then a valid PACER ID if a permanent PACER account has not been selected; otherwise, the free look will not be recognized.

Please make a note that if a user receives a message saying that the document is not available, please check the address line of the browser you are using and make sure that the address starts with ecf.ncmd.uscourts.gov and remove any preceding characters to get to the correct address.